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Message Text

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41
ACTION NODS-00

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---------- 111577
O 091443Z JUL 75
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5059

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 CAIRO 6775

NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR ME IS EG
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR DINITZ

REF: STATE 159920

1. IF I UNDERSTAND IDEA OUTLINED IN PARA 2 REFTEL
CORRECTLY, THE TWO AMERICAN MILITARY POSTS AT THE WESTERN
ENTRANCES OF THE PASSES WOULD BE BETWEEN THE EGYPTIAN FORWARD LINE
AND THE ISRAELI FORWARD LINE SOMEWHERE ON THE EASTERN
SLOPES OF THE PASSES. THE TWO AMERICAN MILITARY POSTS
AT THE EASTERN END OF THE PASSES WOULD BE BEHIND RATHER THAN
IN FRONT OF THE ISRAELI FORWARD LINE. THE UNEF
BUFFER ZONE, I ASSUME, WOULD BE BETWEEN THE EGYPTIAN
FORWARD LINE WEST OF THE WESTERN ENDS OF THE PASSES AND THE
ISRAELI FORWARD LINE ON THE EASTERN SLOPES OF THE PASSES.
THE ISRAELI MONITORING STATION AT JABAL UMM KHUSHAIB WOULD
REMAIN WITH A COMPARABLE ONE TO BE BUILT BY THE
EGYPTIANS SOMEWHERE IN THE BUFFER ZONE.

2. SEVERAL QUESTIONS ARISE WHICH WILL HAVE A BEARING
ON EGYPTIAN REPLY:

A. FIRST IS THE MATTER OF JUST WHERE ON THE
EASTERN SLOPES OF THE PASSES THE ISRAELI FORWARD LINE
WOULD BE. IF THEY STILL OCCUPY ALMOST HALF OF THE PASSES,
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SADAT WILL FIND THE IDEA HARD TO ACCEPT. IF IT IS JUST

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A FEW KILOMETERS, MAYBE HE COULD STOMACH IT. RELATED
TO THIS SAME ISSUE IS THE MATTER OF DIVERGENT DEFINITIONS
OF WHAT CONSTITUTES THE PASSES. THE EGYPTIANS CONTEND,
AS GAMASY AGAIN POINTED OUT TO CODEL BONKER
LAST EVENING, THAT THE GIDI PASS AREA IS SEVEN KILOMETERS
IN LENGTH AND MITLA 21 KILOMETERS. THE ISRAELIS, HE
NOTED, SEEM TO HAVE A MUCH MORE EXTENSIVE DEFINITION OF
THE PASSES. THIS IS NOT MERELY A SEMANTIC POINT, BUT
ONE WITH VERY PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS IN TERMS OF WHERE ARE
THE ENDS (OR ENTRANCES) TO THE PASSES AND WHAT IS MEANT BY
EASTERN OR WESTERN SLOPES.

B. SECOND, IN CONNECTION WITH THE EGYPTIAN
MONITORING STATION TO BE BUILT, THE BUFFER ZONE IS A
RATHER RESTRICTED AREA FOR SUCH AN INSTALLATION. I COULD
BE WRONG, BUT I SUSPECT THAT AN INSTALLATION POSITIONED
IN THE BUFFER ZONE WOULD NOT BE OF MUCH BENEFIT TO THE
EGYPTIANS IN MONITORING ISRAELI ACTIVITIES. IF THIS
IS CORRECT, THE EGYPTIANS WILL PICK IT UP AT ONCE.
THEY HAVE SEVERAL TIMES TALKED OF JABAL YALIQ AS THE
BEST SITE FOR AN INSTALLATION DIRECTED AT MONITORING
ISRAELI ACTIVITIES, BUT THIS LOCATION WOULD PRESUMABLY
BE OUTSIDE THE BUFFER ZONE.

C. THIRD, UNLESS I AM READING THE IDEA WRONG,
WHEREAS THE TWO AMERICAN MILITARY POSTS AT THE
WESTERN ENTRANCES WOULD ADD TO THE EXISTING ISRAELI
CAPABILITY TO MONITOR AND DETER THE EGYPTIANS, THE
AMERICAN MILITARY POSTS AT THE WESTERN ENTRANCES WOULD
BE SANDWICHED BETEEN THE ISRAELI FORWARD LINE AND THEIR
MAIN LINE. THE EGYPTIANS WANT AMERICANS TO REPLACE THE
ISRAELIS IN THE MONITORING STATION; THEY WOULD
FIND IT HARD TO ACCEPT AN AMERICAN MILITARY STATION IN ADDITION
TO THE ISRAELI FACILITY. CONCEIVABLY, SYMMETRY COULD
BE COSMETICALLY IMPROVED BY PUTTING THE TWO AMERICAN
MILITARY POSTS AT THE EASTERN END OF THE PASSES IN FRONT
RPT IN FRONT OF THE ISRAELI FORWARD LINE. THE CONCEPT
MIGHT ALSO FIND MORE APPEAL TO THE EGYPTIANS IF EGYPTIAN
POSTS WOULD BE PERMITTED IN THE WESTERN ENDS OF THE PASSES
WITH AN AMERICAN MILITARY POST AHEAD OF THEM. BUT THE
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CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE ISRAELI STATION WILL REMAIN
A STUMBLING BLOCK.

D. FOURTH, I HAVE SENSED A GROWING HEAD OF
STEAM AGAINST THE CONCEPT OF A NARROW ACCESS
CORRIDOR WITH PARALLEL ROADS RUNNING ALMOST CHEEK BY
HWL. GAMASY STRONGLY OBJECTS TO IT ON THE GROUNDS THAT
THE TWO SIDES ARE TOO CLOSE TOGETHER AND YESTERDAY

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REITERATED THIS TO CODEL BONKER. SADAT, APPARENTLY ECHOING
GAMASY'S VIEW, HAS ALSO RECENTLY SAID THIS IDEA IS NOT
ACCEPTABLE. CONCEIVABLY A SOMEWHAT WIDER CORRIDOR IN
WHICH THE EGYPTIANS AND ISRAELI FORCES WERE FARTHER
APART WOULD HELP, BUT THE EXISTING ROAD NETWORK HARDLY
PERMITS THIS.

3. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, WHILE I BELIEVE SADAT VERY
MUCH WANTS AN AGREEMENT, I THINK THE ODDS ARE NO
BETTER THAN FITY-FIFTY OR PERHAPS LESS THAT HE WOULD
ACCEPT THIS IDEA IN THE FORM IN WHICH I UNDERSTAND IT.
GAMASY CAN BE EXPECTED TO OPPOSE IT. HE WILL ARGUE THAT
SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WOULD FURTHER ADVANTAGE THE ISRAELIS
BY MAKING IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE EGYPTIANS TO EXERCISE
THEIR MILITARY OPTION. THE LATTER MAY BE THEORETICAL
BUT, FROM A COSMETIC POINT OF VIEW, SADAT MUST FOR
POLITICAL REASONS AT LEAST APPEAR TO BE RETAINING IT.

4. SADAT HAS NOW REPEATEDLY PUBLICLY PROCLAIMED
EGYPT'S MINIMAL REQUIREMENT TO BE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM
THE PASSES AND THE RETURN OF THE OILFIELDS. AGAINST THE
ADVICE OF HIS PEOPLE, HE ACCEPTED LESS IN THE FIRST
DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT THAN THEY THOUGHT HE COULD GET.
HE DID SO IN ORDER TO BEGIN THE PEACE PROCESS. THERE
IS POTABILITY IN THE EGYPTIAN DEMANDS, BUT
SADAT IS DEEPLY CONSCIOUS OF HIS POLITICAL VULNERABILITY
IF HE ACCEPTS LESS THAN THE EGYTPIAN PUBLIC HAS COME TO
EXPECT. FAHMY MAY FIND THE IDEA SOMEWHAT MORE
ATTRACTIVE, BUT I DOUBT THAT HE CAN PREVAIL ON A
MILITARY ISUE OF THIS SORT. THE DECISION WILL HAVE
TO BE MADE BY PRESIDENT SADAT IN LIGHT OF HIS READING
OF THE POLITICAL VIABILITY OF THE IDEA.

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5. IF WE CHOOSE TO PRESENT THE IDEA, I THINK WE
SHOULD DO SO AS THE LATEST ISRAELI CONCEPT AND AVOID
SPECIFIC ENDORSEMENT. TO ENDORSE, IT, KNOWING WHAT WE DO
ABOUT SADAT'S VIEWS, WOULD SHAKE SADAT'S FAITH IN
PRESIDENT FORD'S RELIABILITY. ANY SUCH DEVELOPMENT
COULD BE HARMFUL TO OUR FURTHER EFFORTS.

6. I WILL ADVISE FAHMY ALONG THE LINES SET FORTH
PARAS 5 AND 6 REFTEL. I PLAN TO FLY TO WASHINGTON ON
TUESDAY, JULY 15. WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF NEA/EGY COULD
BE INSTRUCTED SEND NECESSARY TRAVEL DATA.

7. N.B. I HAVE JUST BEEN SENT A COPY OF A STORY FILED
LAST NIGHT BY KINGSBURY SMITH WHO, ALONG
WITH WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST, JR., ALSO SAW SADAT YESTERDAY
IN ALEXANDRIA. STORY SUGGESTS SADAT CONFIRMED NEW
AGREEMENT IS ABOUT TO BE CONCLUDED, ALTHOUGH HE HAD NOT
YET BEEN FORMALLY ADVISED BY SU. NOTHING OF THIS SORT
CAME UP IN CODEL BONKER'S AND MY MEETING WITH SADAT
YESTERDAY. HOWEVER, BBC STORY OF YESTERDAY HAS
AROUSED GREAT EXCITEMENT LOCALLY AND BELIEF A NEW
AGREEMENT IS IMMINENT. THE PROBLEM, AS I SEE IT, IS
THAT THE BBC STORY IS NOT IN ACCORD WITH THE DETAILS
SET FORTH REFTEL. EGYPTIANS MAY, THEREFORE, BE IN FOR
SOME DISAPPOINTMENT WHEN THEY HEAR ISRAELI PROPOSAL.
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